

Lesson Plan – Seekers (Grades 6 – 8)

Groups of students may work independently on these activities following teacher instruction. The 3-part worksheet is a tool to guide the student in taking notes for the report or project. The first part defines the park as to type, location and distance from your school. The second part details important natural, cultural or historic features of the national park. The third part deals with the park in relation to society.

1. Set the stage

Read and discuss the *National Parks Background Information*. Distribute copies of the *Worksheet* and demonstrate how to find information in a national park brochure. Use the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area brochure as a sample. Place copies of the *National Park System Map and Guide* or *AAA US map* where all can refer to it. Provide stickers to mark national park locations.

2. Gather information

Distribute brochures for the national parks that you have selected and additional worksheets, if needed. Students can work independently or in groups to gather and pool information for reports on their particular national park. Some topics for the reports are suggested below and you may create others. *Additional information is available at libraries or on the Internet at www.nps.gov*

3. Reports (Written or Oral / Individual or Group)

Reports may include visual aids, models, graphs or charts. Some suggested topics: *Travel* -increase park visitation with travel reports, brochures. *Significance* -importance of historic or cultural events at the park. *Threats Inside and Outside of the Park* -what they are; how to handle them.

4. Wrap up

Pass out copies of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area brochure and invite students to visit this national park with their families.

5. Evaluate

Consider length and quality of oral or written report and member participation; number, variety and detail of visual aids; amount of outside work done to gather additional information.

Going farther:

Get involved! Contact your nearest national park for a community service project. Call 805-370-2301 and speak to the *Volunteer Coordinator* at the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area about working on short or long term community service projects.





National Parks Background Information

The national parks belong to you — and to me, to all of us. Each national park protects something special. It may be a wondrous natural feature, like the deep lake at Crater Lake National Park, the tall Redwood trees at Redwood National Park, or the hot springs and geysers at Yellowstone National Park. In 1872, Yellowstone was the first area to be set aside as a national park for the enjoyment of the people of the United States and to protect the plants and animals living there.

The National Park Service, a part of the US Department of the Interior, was created in 1916 to take care of these parks for all of us. Since the 1930s the National Park System has been expanded to include many different kinds of national parks, such as battlefields, memorials and historic sites. There are now more than 378 different units that are cared for by the National Park Service. These include many places that you might not easily think of as national parks, such as the Statue of Liberty, Independence Hall, Gettysburg Battlefield and the White House. These are historic and cultural sites, not natural areas like Yellowstone, but the National Park Service protects all of them.

All of these very different places have one thing in common. Each represents an important example of America's natural and cultural heritage. They are a *legacy*, an inheritance, which preserves special things about our country for you and for your children, and all the future generations of Americans. Come and visit your national parks. They belong to you.



Worksheet

Part 1

1. Look in the black band of the *Map and Guide* to find the name of your national park and write it down:

2. Circle what type of national park it is (look in the black band also):

National Battlefield	National Historic Site	National Memorial
National Monument	National Park	National Recreation Area
National Seashore	If the answer is not here, please write it in:	

3. What state(s) is your national park in? _____.

Find that state on the *National Park System Map and Guide* or the *AAA Highway Map* and place a sticker where your national park is located.

4. What major highway is near your national park? _____ What direction would you travel from your school to get to this national park? _____

5. Plan a trip to your national park. Write down your estimate of how many miles your national park is from your school: _____ miles

6. Circle what kinds of activities are there to do at your national park:

Camp	Learn about history	Hike
Fish	See exhibits	Go boating

Other: _____

7. Circle when you think is a good time of the year to go to your park:

Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
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Part 2

8. Circle what natural forces have influenced the creation of your park (if your national park is an historic site, go to Question 10):

Erosion from wind, weather, rain	Glaciers
Climate change	Plate tectonics

Other: _____

9. Do you think those forces are still active today?
Use another sheet to write down your explanation.



10. Circle what took place at this park that is historically important:

- a. A famous person was born or lived there.
- b. A famous battle happened there.
- c. An important event took place there.
- d. A group of people from a different culture lived there.

11. If your answer to question 10 was a, b, or c, do you think that is important to us today? Write your explanation on another sheet of paper.

12. If your answer to question 10 was d, does the park brochure tell how those people were able to make a living? Circle your answer:

They were farmers.

They were merchants and traders.

They were hunters and gatherers.

They were explorers.

The park brochure does not give enough information to tell.

13. If you answered question 12, what do you think happened to those people? Use another sheet of paper to write down your answer.

Part 3

14. Your national park belongs to us all. Circle your answer (the word *National* is a clue): Yes No

15. A national park in a remote area is like a small town. It has a superintendent (the mayor), park rangers (teachers and/or police officers), maintenance workers (like repair people, including plumbers and electricians). Can you think of other jobs that would need to be done there?

16. Do you think that climate changes, pollution or littering are threats to this national park? Circle your answer: Yes No

17. What can we do to help protect national parks? Circle your answer:

Visit national parks and encourage others to do so too.

Don't litter at national parks.

All of the above.

